

15 February 2015

SAFETY EMPHASIS FOR MAINTENANCE SHUTDOWN NEXT WEEK

Ensuring everyone gets home safe, every day, is the focus of the Australian Rail Track Corporation's (ARTC) network-wide maintenance shutdown in the Hunter Valley next week, Executive General Manager, Jonathan Vandervoort said today.

"We have over 1000 ARTC and contract staff in the rail corridor during these shutdowns and with moving equipment, trucks and machinery it's crucial everyone remains vigilant about safety," Mr Vandervoort said.

"In particular, we would like to ask motorists and members of the community to be aware of changed traffic conditions and heavy work vehicles entering and exiting sections of the rail corridor and pay particular attention around level crossings."

ARTC figures over the last five years show level crossing incidents are more likely to occur on its network in regional rather than metropolitan areas, with 82 per cent of collisions and 76 per cent of reported near hits occurring in a rural location.

"We want this year's first network-wide shutdown to start off right, and are urging everyone to apply a safety-first frame of mind to everything they do," Mr Vandervoort said.

Around 100 individual projects to keep the rail network reliable will take place during the 72-hour network closedown from 6am Tuesday 23 February to 6am Friday 26 February.

Typical rail maintenance tasks like replacing sleepers, cleaning and compacting ballast, improving the condition of level crossings as well as technical jobs like signalling work, will take place throughout the Hunter Valley from the Port to Narrabri and from Muswellbrook to Ulan.

"By 'closing down' the network and with fewer trains running, we create a safer environment for our people and provide the opportunity to get the maximum amount of rail maintenance done in an efficient amount of time," Mr Vandervoort said.

"There's a lot of planning that goes into these shutdowns, but each and every staff member and contractor also has a responsibility to our value of No Harm and look out for each other.

"These shutdowns are planned more than a year in advance and we closely work with the Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator and our customers to make sure we minimise impact on the Hunter coal chain," Mr Vandervoort said.

"We would like to thank the community for their patience and understanding while the works take place as we appreciate it does cause inconvenience."

The next major, network-wide maintenance shutdown will be 27 to 29 April.

ENDS

Media Contact: Bas Bolyn, ARTC, 0477 340 658

For specific information regarding passenger services, please visit www.sydneytrains.info.

Level Crossing works:

Level crossing works are taking place throughout next week, including :

- Reconditioning of Cemetery Lane level crossing, Singleton.
The crossing will be closed for the majority of the possession and work will be continuous from 06:00 Tues 23/2/16 to 03:00 Friday 26/2/16
Approximately 50m on each track will be reconditioned.
- Callaghans Lane, Quirindi – Works will be undertaken adjacent to Callaghans Lane with traffic control in place. Any interruption will be temporary and at this stage any road works are planned for Thursday 25th February between 6:00am and 5:00pm.

Track Reconditioning Works to be undertaken 23rd – 26th February include:

- Mareeba Road, Parkville - track reconditioning, a temporary level crossing will be constructed and in place
- White Street, Blandford - track reconditioning, a temporary level crossing will be constructed and in place

We encourage residents and motorists to use alternative routes where possible and avoid these worksites.